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## ART AND PROGRESS

AN ILLUSTRATED MONTHLY MAGAZINE

Published by the American Federation of Arts  
1741 New York Ave., Washington, D. C.

LEILA MECHLIN, Editor

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SUBSCRIPTION PRICE \$2.00 A YEAR

VOL. V AUGUST 1914 No. 10

### ART FOR THE PEOPLE

#### AN OPEN LETTER

*To the Editor of Art and Progress:*

The great epoch of art in old Greece was in the time of Praxiteles. It reached perfection, not in the great artists it produced, but in the art appreciation the artists received all around from the people which made them great. All of Greece looked for their expression with love, whether in sculpture, painting, poetry or architecture. There was a great fête when any sculptor announced one of his pieces finished. It was placed in public, where it could be seen by all, open for criticism and admiration. The people were educated in art and showed interest in it. The artists thus through

their works communicated directly with the people.

We should have a public place, in the heart of every city in America, where business men and women could go in and out and spend a few of their leisure moments in finding recreation in viewing works of art.

Do not have juries of selection or put up pictures of great collectors and dealers only to further their business interests; but take the artists, either in alphabetical order or in districts, and let the people judge. Have laymen hang the pictures, and you will probably say that we shall have some funny experiences, but I believe it would be very little time before the people will be called upon to judge pictures as well as other municipal affairs. Then and not until then will the artist paint some essential idea and talk to the masses. Art should belong to the people. They should feel that artists speak to them.

The writer had an opportunity, on a recent tour through Florence, to listen to some American tourists at the Uffizi Gallery. Two young men came to the gallery ten minutes before the closing time. One of the young men looked at his watch and said, "Ten minutes; do you think, Jack, we can do it?" "Oh, yes," replied Jack, and they fairly ran across the gallery, looking right and left. Surely they "did it," but it did not do them much good. Some of our visitors go into the galleries and, taking a catalogue, look only for well-known names. The pictures themselves are only of secondary interest to them. For this reason, let us abolish the catalogue from the municipal galleries, so that the people may become educated to look at the picture and judge it for themselves. Let all artists sign their names legibly. From these galleries also let us abolish the art instructor, leaving entirely to the people the judgment of good art. Then our art critics will not have to write against cubists and other "ists," for the people will be sufficiently educated to condemn work that is not art.

A few years ago a young farmer came to the Metropolitan Museum of Art and,

seeing a student copying there, said, "Excuse me; I would like to ask you a question: are you paid by the day or by the piece?" The student replied, "I am not paid at all." The farmer shook his head and looked with astonishment, saying, "Well, well!" wondering, I suppose, what the poor devil lived upon.

It is generally accepted by the people that the artists belong to the leisure class. But this idea would soon disappear if the people could see that our mission in art is to ennoble them. How can we ennoble them if we do not reach them? Perhaps there would not be so many criminals if people could learn more of esthetic pleasures. The American Federation of Arts is doing excellent work in sending out exhibitions to the different cities and thus educating the people, but in addition each city should have its own gallery, which should be open both day and evening. These exhibitions should be changed every month, and only one picture of one artist should be exhibited, thus every one would be given a hearing. Then surely we shall have progress in art.

ZELMA BAYLOS.

#### A CORRECTION

In the account of the Fifth Annual Convention of the American Federation of Arts published in the July number of ART AND PROGRESS, it was erroneously stated that a resolution, requesting the Secretary of the Interior to obtain the counsel and advice of the Federal Commission of Fine Arts before adopting any plans for the development of the Yosemite Park or other National Park Reserves, was offered by Mr. Cass Gilbert, whereas it was in fact offered by Mr. Charles L. Hutchinson and in no wise at Mr. Gilbert's suggestion. The confusion arose through the fact that the question of the development of the National Parks along artistic rather than commercial lines, with the object of conserving their natural beauty, was brought to the attention of the Convention by Mr. Gilbert who had just visited the Yosemite Valley Park and was profoundly impressed by its superb scenery.

## NOTES

### INTERNATIONAL CONGRESS FOR ART EDUCATION

The Fifth International Congress for Art Education, Drawing and Art Applied to Industries will be held in Paris in the summer of 1916. The Congress meets at the cordial invitation of the French Government.

The Third Congress held in Paris in 1908 was a memorable one and it was then generally conceded that the United States led in public school drawing. At the Dresden Congress in 1912 there was an increase in attendance and were many more exhibits from the United States. To make the American exhibit in Paris thoroughly representative of the best that is done is the earnest desire of the committee which has this work in charge. To accomplish this end it is thought necessary to have Government and individual support, and a strong industrial arts exhibit as well as the customary work in drawing and painting.

Other countries make very considerable appropriations for the purpose of representation at these Congresses. It seems reasonable, therefore, that the United States should do the same, especially as much of the improvement in our art teaching today is directly traceable to the influence of these Congresses.

The American Committee is divided into four sections of five members each and is representative of the teaching profession of the east, south, middle west and west. Mr. Augustus F. Rose of Providence, Rhode Island, is Chairman of the eastern section; Miss Emma M. Church of Chicago is Chairman of the middle western section; Mr. Ellsworth Woodward of New Orleans is Chairman of the southern section, and Prof. A. B. Clark of Leland Stanford University is Chairman of the western section.

In a preliminary notice sent out by the Working Committee as a whole the following statement is made:

"We seek support and sympathy from the leading Americans because the cause warrants it. The destiny of the country is, to a large extent, in the hands